

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A system for providing closed-loop operation for promotional events for a video gaming machine that includes a payout table, the promotional events being associated with particular winning criteria that is defined independently from the payout table, the system comprising:

a controller box that is operable to interface to the video gaming machine and is interconnected to the main processor of the video gaming machine;

a promotional server that is communicatively coupled to the controller box and operable to:

maintain a database of promotional events with each promotional event having promotional content, winning criteria and scheduling information;

deliver to the controller box, at least one promotional event ~~a portion of~~ the database of promotional events;

receive from the controller box, messages indicating that the winning criteria for a particular promotional event ~~has~~have been met; and

the controller box being further operative to:

display promotional content on the display of the video gaming machine;

monitor the activity of the video gaming machine to determine if the winning criteria ~~has~~have been met; and

provide information indicating that the winning criteria for a particular promotional event ~~has~~have been satisfied, whereby the operation of the video gaming machine and the payout table remain intact.

Claim 2. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the promotional server includes a software program that enables a user to define particular promotional events for particular controller boxes by:

defining an award to be associated with the promotional event;
defining a schedule for the promotional event;
defining the winning criteria for the promotional event;
receiving instructions to store the defined promotional event; and
storing the defined promotional event into the database.

Claim 3. (original) The system of claim 2, wherein the software program further comprises an interface to upload graphical and textual content to be included in the promotional content.

Claim 4. (original) The system of claim 2, wherein the software program further comprises an interface to create graphics and textual content to be included in the promotional content.

Claim 5. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the controller box is associated a single video gaming machine that is associated with a single operator and is operative to display the promotional content in accordance with the scheduling information and to display content without altering the content associated with the video gaming machine.

Claim 6. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the controller box is further operative to receiving entertainment content from an entertainment source and to display the entertainment content on the display of the video gaming machine.

Claim 7. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the video gaming machine is a video poker machine and the winning criteria for the promotional event identifies a particular poker hand that is not included in the payout table of the video poker machine.

Claim 8. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the video gaming machine is a video poker machine and the winning criteria for the promotional event identifies a particular poker hand.

Claim 9. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the video gaming machine is a video blackjack machine and the winning criteria for the promotional event identifies a particular blackjack hand that is not included in the payout table of the video blackjack machine.

Claim 10. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the video gaming machine is a video blackjack machine and the winning criteria for the promotional event identifies a particular blackjack hand.

Claim 11. (original) A method for providing closed-loop operation for promotional events in a video gaming environment, the method comprising the steps of:

defining the parameters of a promotional event, the parameters including the winning criteria for the promotional event, the promotional event being independent from, but not exclusive of, the standard winning criteria for the video gaming machines in the video gaming environment;

monitoring the activity of a video gaming machine to identify a winning event, the winning event comprising the satisfaction of the winning criteria during the active time period; and

recording information pertaining to the winning event.

Claim 12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of defining the parameters of the promotional event further comprises defining the award to be associated with the promotional event.

Claim 13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of recording information pertaining to the winning event comprises recording:

the identification of a player operating the video gaming machine; and

the identification of the promotional event.

Claim 14. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of recording information pertaining to the winning event comprises recording:

the identification of a player operating the video gaming machine;

the identification of the video gaming machine; and

the identification of the promotional event.

Claim 15. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of restricting access to the recorded information to limit the potential for fraud

Claim 16. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of defining the parameters of the promotional event further comprises defining a schedule for the promotional event.

Claim 17. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of defining a schedule for the promotional event further comprises the steps of:

defining an advertisement time period for displaying promotional content to advertise the promotional event; and

defining an active time period during which the promotional event is to be active.

Claim 18. (original) The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

displaying promotional content during the defined advertisement time period.

Claim 19. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of monitoring the activity of the video gaming machines is performed during the defined active time period.

Claim 20. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of defining the promotional event further comprises defining a budgeted award amount and the step of monitoring the activity of the video gaming machine is limited to the active time period during which the budgeted award amount has not been exhausted.

Claim 21. (currently amended) A controller box to be used in facilitating closed-loop operation for promotional events available through a standard video gaming machine without modifying the basic operation of the standard video gaming machine, the promotional events having winning criteria, the system comprising a controller box that is operable to:

interface to a display device to control the display of information pertaining to the promotional event;

monitor an information source that provides activity information;

determine when the activity information satisfies the winning criteria;

store a record indicating the satisfaction of the winning criteria for the promotional event; and

provide a means for retrieving the stored record.

Claim 22. (original) The controller box of claim 21, further comprising an interface to an entertainment source to receive entertainment content and is further operable to display the entertainment content on the display device.

Claim 23. (original) The controller box of claim 21, further comprising an interface to a promotional server for receiving information defining the promotional events.

Claim 24. (original) The controller box of claim 21, wherein the information source is a video gaming machine and the activity information defines particular events occurring with the video gaming machine.

Claim 25. (original) The controller box of claim 24, wherein the video gaming machine is a video poker machine and the activity information identifies particular hands.

Claim 26. (original) The controller box of claim 24, wherein video gaming machine is a black jack machine and the activity information identifies particular hands.

Claim 27. (original) The controller box of claim 24, wherein video gaming machine is a slot machine and the activity information identifies particular plays.